

**Project Name:** Change the Story

**Theme:** Climate Change (Search words: Biodiversity Conservation, Carbon Credits, Nature-Based Solutions)

**Project Summary:** Change the Story project focuses on nature-based solutions because of the extra benefits they provide to biodiversity conservation, the protection of landscapes, and community development. Together with our partners, we are convinced that local greenhouse gas emissions should preferably be compensated with locally produced credits. Therefore, Change the Story aims to deliver a proof of concept by connecting Kenyan private sector players with local biodiversity, reforestation or agroforestry initiatives, and intermediary organizations, like carbon credit auditing schemes.

Under this project, Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya has developed and released a report titled “Change the Story: Developing a Local Carbon Market in Kenya.” The report describes the current situation and reflects on the opportunities for a Kenyan carbon market. This report is limited to the role of the Kenyan private sector in the voluntary carbon market (VCM) with a focus on nature-based solutions (NBS) in addressing global warming, biodiversity loss, and deforestation. The report was published with our partners and the global Sustainability Consultant Group, TheRockGroup.

The future of the Kenyan carbon market looks bright. The potential for carbon sequestration is vast, and global demand is growing rapidly. However, the export-focused policy of the Kenyan government leaves Kenyan companies in the dark about domestic offsetting options. Even with the ongoing debate about the benefits of the growing market for carbon credits, the report found that Kenya has virtually no legal framework that would restrict credits to be issued or bought, no taxation of credits, nor the introduction of a mandatory carbon emissions market. Alternatively, the government has been noted to be firmly in favor of an active role of the private sector in reforestation and afforestation initiatives.

**Project Objective:** Change the Story project aims to investigate the options for establishing a system that would facilitate Kenyan companies' contributions to reforestation, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation by offsetting their carbon emissions using Kenyan carbon credits.

**Target Group(s):** Companies that want to reduce and offset their carbon emissions.

**Impact:**

- Developed a report on the Local Carbon Market in Kenya, showing the massive potential for carbon sequestration with growing global demand.
- Conducted a carbon footprint analysis and corporate reduction strategies for the Kenyan Private Sector.
- For this report, several stakeholders and experts were interviewed, two online conferences were attended, and relevant background information was studied.

**Partners:** PUM Netherlands.

**Duration:** 2020 – 2023.

Download the [Report here](#).

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**Context:** According to the 'Taskforce Report on Forest Resources Management and Logging Activities in Kenya' in April 2018, The Forest Sector is vital to Kenya's social and economic well-being as most economic sectors rely on environmental-based resources. The sector contributes about 7 billion to Kenya Shillings' economy and employs over 50,000 people directly and another 300,000 indirectly. Forest ecosystems also enhance landscape resilience to climate change. In the country's water towers, forests provide environmental services that include water quality and quantity, reduction of soil erosion, and creation of micro-climatic conditions that maintain or improve productivity. Forests are also known to be among the most effective sinks of greenhouse gases, which cause climate change, and hence, they are essential in contributing to climate change mitigation.

Kenya's forest cover is estimated to be about 7.4% of the total land area, a far cry from the recommended global minimum of 10%. On the other hand, Kenya's closed canopy forest cover currently stands at about 2% of the total land area, compared to the African average of 9.3% and a world average of 21.4 percent. Most of Kenya's closed canopy forests are montane forests and are also the nation's water towers. In recent years, Kenya's forests have been depleted at an alarming rate of about 5,000 hectares annually. This is estimated to lead to an annual reduction in water availability of approximately 62 million cubic meters, translating to an economic loss to the economy of over USD 19 million. If it is not urgently addressed, the depletion has the potential to roll back strides towards the attainment of

Vision 2030 and the Government's Big Four Agenda of food and nutritional security, affordable and decent housing, universal healthcare, and manufacturing.

**Problem:** To meet the required coverage of 10% reforestation, restoration of landscape, and rehabilitation of biodiversity, maximized joint efforts are needed, as well as rigorous data tracking. The urgency can only be tackled when each institute, organization, civil society, NGO, Private Sector, and citizen plays their role. A nationwide platform is the answer to understanding the areas that need to be reforested, restored, and rehabilitated and to grasp how we make progress. While there is a lot of data in the private sector, we lack data consolidation to show the collective efforts and progress toward achieving 10% forest cover.

**Project Concept:** A platform that combines information, including how many trees are collectively grown from the different fronts (individual organizations), how many matured or didn't, and most importantly, which types of trees are fit for particular regions and weather conditions, is urgently needed. To drive change, track change, and communicate about the change, we are developing an online platform with dynamic maps flagging all areas that need urgent reforestation. It will provide information about the area, the type of restoration needed, and how best to contribute. The flagged areas will also show the theory of change, indicating the potential impact once action is taken. The maps will show the actual situation on the ground, baseline status, and the difference attained after restoration (before and after comparison). Each tree planted and each area restored will show immediate change. The platform will show the situation we are coming from, the current/real-time situation, and the target for the area. The platform will provide practical DIY or links to the desired action when others restore the area. It will have a citizen action space and an organization/private sector/civil society space. All stakeholders will voluntarily provide the accurate data required to populate the platform.

**Expected Longterm Outcomes:**

1. Increased forest cover towards achieving the 10%.
2. Increased reforestation commitment from the private sector.
3. Availability of more accurate data on tree planting.
4. A developed local carbon market in Kenya.